

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 3 are pending in the present application. By this Amendment, claims 1 - 3 have been amended. No new matter has been added. It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated October 17, 2003.

Drawings:

In item 1 of the Action, the Examiner requires that Fig. 1 be labeled as Prior Art. Accordingly, Fig. 1 has been amended in the manner required by the Examiner.

Specification:

The abstract and specification stand objected to in items 2 and 3 of the Action, respectively, due to minor informalities. However, the abstract and specification have been amended to correct such informalities. As such, withdrawal of these objections is respectfully requested.

As To The Merits

As to the merits of this case, the Examiner sets forth the following rejection:

claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Salvo et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,496,751) in view of Poth (U.S. Patent No. 6,445,959).

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 1:

Claim 1 calls for an NC machining assisting system comprising: a plurality of NC machine tools each including NC program generating means and NC program improving and updating means that are connected to a central manager via a network; actual machining performance information is supplied to the central manager from the respective NC machine tools; the central manager generates a database on the basis of the collected actual machining performance information and stores the database therein; and the NC machine tools are each permitted to retrieve information necessary for machining from the database.

With regard to independent claim 1, the Examiner relies solely on the Savlo reference for teaching the features of this claim. However, Savlo fails to disclose an NC machining assisting system comprising: a plurality of NC machine tools each including NC program generating means and NC program improving and updating means that are connected to a central manager via a network, as called for in claim 1.

Instead, Salvo is only concerned with monitoring the process variables of a single process machine 10, and not a plurality of NC machine tools. Moreover, the process machine 10 of Salvo fails to constitute the claimed NC machine tool since the process machine 10 fails to include an NC program generating means and NC program improving and updating means.

However, more importantly, while Salvo may disclose that machine process variables from the machine process 10 and the various sensor assemblies 12, 121-129 and 221 are transmitted and stored in the data module 13 and machine operator control unit 15 before being transmitted to control unit 40 wherein unit 40 includes software for data acquisition, data mining, and analysis to thereby enable process analysis and decision making, Salvo fails to disclose that the information produced and stored by the control unit 40 is subsequently retrieved for machining by the process machine 10.

This is in contrast to the present invention, for example, wherein the central manager collects actual operation performance records from a plurality of NC machine tools via a network, and the actual operation performance records which are classified according to a machining type can widely be supplied from the central manager to the NC machine tools to be used in subsequent machining.

In other words, Salvo clearly fails to disclose the features of independent claim 1 concerning the central manager generates a database on the basis of the collected actual machining performance information and stores the database therein; and the NC machine tools are each permitted to retrieve information necessary for machining from the database.

Independent Claim 2:

Claim 2 calls for an NC machining assisting system comprising: a plurality of NC machine tools each including NC program generating means and NC program improving and updating means that are connected to a central manager via a network; actual machining performance information is supplied to the central manager from the respective NC machine tools; the central manager generates a database on the basis of the actual machining performance information collected via the network and stores the database therein; and an apparatus other than the NC machine tools which has a network connecting function is permitted to retrieve information necessary for machining from the database through connection to the central manager via the network.

With regard to independent claim 2, the Examiner relies solely on the Salvo reference for teaching the features of this claim. However, Salvo fails to disclose an NC machining assisting system comprising: a plurality of NC machine tools each including NC program generating means and NC program improving and updating means that are connected to a central manager via a network, as called for in claim 2.

Instead, Salvo is only concerned with monitoring the process variables of a single process machine 10, and not a plurality of NC machine tools. Moreover, the process machine 10 of Salvo fails to constitute the claimed NC machine tool since the process machine 10 fails to include an NC program generating means and NC program improving and updating means.

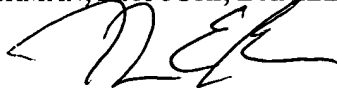
In addition, the applied secondary reference of Poth fails to disclose the above-noted drawbacks and deficiencies of the primary reference of Salvo with regard to both independent claims 1 and 2.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicant requests such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case. If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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"Prior Art"

FIG. 1

